

SANTA CLAUS' "STOCK FARM"

BY L. P. DEXTER



Typical Eskimauk

"More rapid than eagles his couriers they came, And he whistled and shouted and called them by name: Now, Dasher! now, Dancer! now, Prancer! now, Vixen! On, Comet! on, Cupid! on, Dunder and Blitzen! To the top of the porch, to the top of the wall! Now, dash away! dash away! dash away all!"

If the millions of English-speaking children few, if any, will fail to recognize the foregoing verse, and in doing so their thoughts will naturally wander to the great Frozen North, where the reindeer browses for 364 days and nights in each year, husbanding their strength for the gruelling drive on Christmas Eve with merry Old Kris Kringle as their pilot.

Not so many years ago Old Kris paid a visit to Uncle Sam and laid before him the dilemma in which he found himself. So frequent has been the visits of the stock to American homes in the past century that Santa Claus' task in making his yearly rounds to the fireplaces in this country alone, where diminutive stockings are hung each Christmas Eve, had become so herculean that unless he could double and treble and quadruple his stock of reindeer he would be unable to visit all the homes wherein he was expected. Uncle Sam saw the justice of his argument, and rather than disappoint any one of his million or more little nieces and nephews he promised Old Kris that hereafter reindeer would be supplied him from Uncle Sam's own stock farm, which was to be established within his own domain.

Accordingly, Alaska, or that portion of it belonging to the United States, was selected as the spot where reindeer would be established, and propagated. Emigrants were sent to Lapland, and there purchased a number of stags and hinds, and exported them to Alaska. Several Laplanders were induced to accompany the herd to Alaska, and arriving there they have spent years in instructing the

Eskimos in the use and care of the reindeer. This was slow work, for the Eskimo had become wedded to the use of the dog as a beast of burden and they were suspicious of the horned monstrosities that had been thrust upon them. In the first place, they were afraid of the stags, and then, again, in finding for them a place of shelter it entailed extra labor, for snow falls apart from those in which the Eskimo dwelt, had to be built. Every Eskimo abhors labor in any form, and even to this day they resent Uncle Sam's interference in seeking to wean them from their beloved dogs, with whom they eat, live and sleep.

Everyone in the Northland derives more benefit today from Santa Claus stock farm than the Eskimos, for whose benefit Congress established them in 1892. The efforts to instruct the Eskimo boy in herding reindeer has been fraught with many difficulties. The most important reindeer stations are at Teller, Cape Prince of Wales, Golovin Bay and Unalakleet. All are closely adjacent to missions to which the government lends reindeer and employs Lapland herders to instruct the mission boys. To become a herder the Eskimo must desert the family igloo, isolate himself from his playmates and practically live in the open six long, weary years without any recompense but his keep. If all goes well, however, at the end of the sixth year Uncle Sam presents him with 50 reindeer.

To separate an Eskimo from his family is little short of capital punishment in his eyes, for he is a thoroughly domestic creature and communicative in every instinct, sharing all their possessions in common. No spirited boy will endure

such a life, and spirit is not lacking in our Eskimo cousins. If at the end of the first year the apprentice's work satisfies his Lapland instructor he receives two female deer. The increase, if successful, should be in six years 50 deer, but not infrequently upon one pretext or another the Laplander turns him adrift before his apprenticeship ends and claims as his own the deer for which the apprentice has toiled. The Eskimo may sell the male of his herd for support, but the females belong to the government. During his apprenticeship the mission supports the boy, but as the reindeer supplies food, clothing, bedding and shelter his keep can hardly be regarded as an extravagant outlay of cash.

Although the reindeer industry in Alaska has been established about 15 years, and while from Bristol Bay to Point Barrow there are 10,000 Eskimos, yet it is extremely doubtful if one in every 50 owns a reindeer. One man living near Golovin Bay has a herd of 200 deer, for which he is paid 15 years, while another herder boasts of 80 deer, the reward of 14 years' labor.

The wealthiest Eskimo in Alaska is Shook Mary, known to all Eskimos as Queen Mary. Mary owns 300 reindeer, which she inherited at her husband's death. Mary lives near Unalakleet and keeps her reindeer at the government station, which is within a short distance of the Swedish mission. She has a number of Eskimo boys to care for her herd, and these she pays from her own pocket. When obliged to send a deer to buy the boys food, the mission is invariably the purchaser at the mission's price of \$20 a deer. These herders have as their inspa-

nable companions Lapland, or Eskimo, dogs, which care for the deer as collies care for sheep.

No animal in the world can navigate as well in the teeth of a gale or blizzard as a reindeer. When overtaken by a blizzard on the hills the deer invariably follows the wind. The further they go North the better the moss, which they dig out of the snow with their feet and nose. So long do their antlers grow that they often prevent them from burrowing deep enough in the snow to reach the moss and it is then that the apprentice has to come to their rescue and shovel away the snow and thus enable his herd to feed. If this task is too great he resorts to still more drastic measures and saws off those prongs of the antlers that interfere with the deer's feeding.

While the reindeer is universally shy and timid, they nevertheless are belligerent among themselves. They attack with feet and gore with their antlers. These antlers, however, they shed in March and April, although new ones immediately sprout forth. Whereas every American boy and girl's conception of a reindeer is one in which the deer is harnessed to a sled or sleigh, nevertheless the breaking of a reindeer to harness is fraught with more perils and difficulties than any bronco busting was ever called upon to go

through. Timid in the extreme, the deer cower and cringe when approached by their herders. The breaking process begins when they are very young and when they are first harnessed. This familiarity the deer hater resents. The halter lead is securely fastened to a firmly planted post and the deer is left to fight it out alone. He tugs and pulls and backs and swings until he becomes exhausted and then it is taught to lead. When sufficiently cowed and tamed the deer is harnessed to a heavily laden sled and allowed to run and leap and buck to its heart's content. It generally takes anywhere from one to three weeks to break a deer to harness, and in many instances it is a year or more before it becomes thoroughly trustworthy and gentle in harness.

The reindeer is as fleet as the wind and far stronger than dogs, and for this reason they are almost universally utilized in transporting Uncle Sam's mails in the Frozen North, although experience has shown that they have not the endurance of a horse. The driver of these deer sleds invariably latches up his team in single file, a stout rope leading from the off antler of the leader back to the sled is used by the driver to guide and control the team. Their usefulness as beasts of burden is best demonstrated in the

mountainous regions, as they are as agile and as surefooted as a mountain goat, and for this reason they can traverse trails that to the uninitiated appear to be impassable.

As timid as the reindeer is, however, he possesses a will of his own and, like all children of nature, he is as stubborn as a mule. Let a reindeer become tired or take a notion that it needs a rest, no amount of coaxing or beating can make it budge from its tracks. Although the journey may be one of only a few miles, a reindeer is just as liable to stop half way, swerve from the beaten trail, pick out a soft spot and lie down, there to remain until it is good and ready to arise and continue the journey. In this respect the reindeer is like unto his new-found master, the Eskimo. Each is gentle, but each is stubborn.

In one sense the reindeer appeals strongly to the Eskimo. The meat of no animal, fish or fowl is sweeter or more delicious than that of the reindeer. Reindeer steak is ever hailed with delight in a mining camp, where it is regarded as the one delicacy of the season. This meat usually brings from 75 cents to \$1 a pound and the demand invariably exceeds the supply. A reindeer on the hoof brings \$50; yet, when butchered, the purchaser can quadruple his money, for not a particle of the

deer goes to waste. October and November are the butchering months, when the fattest of the herd are rounded up and slaughtered. The meat is prepared for market, the skins are stretched and dried and the antlers hung up and cured, all of which is sold at a big profit to the reindeer butcher. It is no uncommon sight to see 50 or more reindeer sleds, each hauled by from 4 to 10 deer, laden high with dead deer, on their way to the stations, where the meat is to be cut up and skins and antlers cured.

Uncle Sam has expended a vast amount of money in endeavoring to popularize the reindeer in Alaska, and in one sense he has succeeded. As a beast of burden in these regions the deer has no equal. Its skin furnishes the warmest garments and bed clothing for the Eskimo and its meat is unexcelled as food. Yet, despite these several virtues, the deer is far from popular with the Eskimo, who would rather share his bit of jerked meat and crust of black bread with his beloved dog than to own the finest herd of reindeer in Alaska—that is, if he should have to care for that herd and give up his dog.

Experts in Washington, however, are not entirely discouraged and the various missions and reindeer herds are not only kept intact, but each year plans are being formulated for the extension of this industry, and, as the herds increase and multiply, it must follow that their use will become more general as time wears on.

Uncle Sam, however, feels amply repaid for all the time, thought and money he has expended on his new venture. Each year, when old Santa Claus pays him his annual visit and makes requisition for a new Dasher, a new Dancer, Prancer or Vixen, Uncle Sam smiles his blindest and throws wide the gates of his stockades, thereby giving Old Kris free rein to go and restock his stable to his heart's content. Uncle Sam knows Santa Claus' work is cut out for him and he also knows that not a house within his vast domain must be passed by without a stop from Santa Claus, even though it takes every reindeer in Alaska or Lapland to make the journey.

An alloy that sends out showers of sparks when struck with another metal consists of iron, cerium and lanthanum and one other very rare metal. The discovery was made by the noted German chemist, Herr Auer von Welsbach, who invented the Welsbach gas mantles. He hopes to use the discovery in connection with igniting blasting charges of powder, dynamite, nitro glycerin, etc.

IN SANTA CLAUS' WORKSHOP



Express Train made from Broken Blocks of Wood

Now that the date for Santa Claus' annual descent down the family chimney approaches, interest naturally centers in the myriads of toys he sleighs around with him as well as in those who make them. For a year past an army of men, women and children have been at work making Christmas toys, while the wheels of many of the biggest factories of the world have been whirling around, each revolution resulting in one or more of the finished product.

The greater percentage of the toys Santa Claus tucks into the little stockings are, as carefully hung at the bedside each Xmas Eve, made in Germany. For several generations past Germany has led the world in toy manufacture, although the tremendous influx of Teutons to this country has resulted in a big impetus to the enterprise in all of the big American cities. Here whole families can be found all steady employed at toy making. Children play quite as important a part in the work as their parents and evince quite as much pride and even a livelier interest in the task than their elders.

In Germany toy making is regarded as one of the country's chief industries, and there are many factories in which toys of one sort and another are turned out in their entirety; and then, too, there are others where only portions of the work are completed and the remainder is done by piece work by workmen in their homes. Here is where the entire family is assigned some portion of the work. Girls apply more generally to the making of dolls. The heads are made in the factories, as are their sawdust bodies. Then these parts are assembled and turned over to piece workers, who take them home, put them together and prepare the clothes for dolly, dress her and

send her back to the factory, where the finishing touches are put on her before exporting her to the furthestmost corners of the globe.

Among the toys thus home made are, for instance, the animals so often found in the Noah's Arks that grace the playroom of nearly every child in the universe. Dwellers in the mountains of Saxony lead in this industry. In many respects this section of Saxony closely resembles the Catskill Mountains of the United States, where little isolated villages dot the hills and valleys, with their few dwellings scattered about at rare intervals. In summer these mountain dwellers cultivate their little farms and garden patches, but in winter they all devote their entire time to toy making, working far into the night at the benches of their little huts.

Year after year these mountaineers work at the same task, making the same style of toys, making the same number each year, and all done in such a monotonously systematic manner as would drive the average American to the verge of despair. They never tire of their task, seemingly, and always work long and hard in the summer months to provide food and clothing to carry them through the winter, so that their toy making can go on uninterrupted.

Thus they work the winter through, by their combined efforts turning out little arks and their inmates to a great number. It might seem, however, that even with their combined efforts, every member of the family faithfully doing his or her part, that their output would be limited, since there is so much cutting, carving and coloring to be done upon even the roughest and crudest of the little toys, yet they manage to accomplish a surprising amount of work and

reap a rich reward, according to the wage standard of their respective countries.

It might be interesting to follow the efforts of one of these families in the manufacture of animals from the tree to the ark. The head of the family, and skilled in that sort of work, takes a small block of wood cut out, not lengthwise, but across the grain, and upon one end of this block he draws the profile outline of, say, a horse. Then with a scroll saw he saws away from the block down through its entire length, all the wood outside the lines as drawn on the end of it for a guide. Now he has the block of wood in the rough outlines of a horse, but very thick and able bodied.

Then from this block he splits off, down through it and with the grain, many sections as the block will permit, three or four or maybe half a dozen, each one of these being a complete horse in outline, a little horse in black. These crude little horses are then turned over to other members of the family, and each is fashioned into its finished form. In this way it can be seen that much labor is saved at the start, but there is another way of preparing the material, and this is a more advanced method.

In this part of Saxony there are many wood turners who make it a business to saw out these toy animals into blocks, and these they sell to the toy makers, that they might complete them. Then,



Dolly's Seamstress and Her Dresses



Staining Glass Balls for Christmas Trees

too, these wood turners supply the mountaineers with little rings of wood so fashioned that it is possible to turn out a wide variety of animals from them. The ring maker cuts from the end of a stick of round timber a disk of wood the thickness equal to the desired height of the animal later to be made, and then, mounting the disk in a turning lathe, he begins work on the body of the wood at the disk's outer rim, turning away the material in such shapes that when the rim is finally finished and cut apart it will show, and, of course, wherever it is cut, the outline of the animal thus fashioned in it.

The turning of these rings is the work of expert mechanics, who become so proficient at their task that the amount of waste is infinitesimally small. They

must be expert workmen for the reason that the main portion of the result of this work can only be seen when it is nearly completed. It is not until the block is cut apart that the turner can discover an error, if one has been made. If such is the case, he must throw away the entire block, and this would entail a waste, which, to the stolid Teuton, mind, would be little short of sinful. They must turn away the wood not only from the outer side of the various animals they are fashioning, but from the inner sides as well, and they must do this in such a manner as not only to produce a lifelike shape when the ring is cut, but so as to avoid leaving some parts of the body too thick and others too thin.

All mechanics engaged in turning out



Making Teddy Bears

the toy animals make a specialty of some particular animal, and for years he works only on that especial pattern. Men who have been turning out horses for, perhaps, 25 years cannot pattern a cow if their lives were at stake. One man spends his life in turning out horse rings, another cow rings and so on through the entire menagerie, no one man devoting his time to more than one pattern. Seemingly, they never tire of their work, have no desire to branch out in other work, and they are apparently perfectly satisfied if the fruits of this year's labor compare favorably with that of the last.

Perhaps, the most interesting class of toy makers are those who manufacture that style of animal of the furry or fleecy tribe. For instance, there are hundreds of families on New York's East Side who manufacture thousands of toy sheep each year. These are covered with fleece, and are made to bleat when their little sides are pressed. Every part of the work is done at home. The fleece is bleached and carded at home and then glued to the little wooden frames, that also are turned out in the tenements. The same applies to the Teddy Bears, although the latter became such a craze that factories devoted exclusively to their manufacture sprung up all over the country. One woman who had been left with several children to support following her husband's death found that all she had left from the wreck was \$1,000 in the form of life insurance. This she used in starting a Teddy Bear factory, and in three years she cleared close to \$100,000 on her investment of \$1,000.

The mechanical toy industry is a tremendous one, and one in which many millions of dollars are invested. Of course, each of these little devices has some real mechanical or inventive merit, and they are to be had at prices ranging all the way from a penny to \$1,000. Fortunes are spent each year in the purchase of these toys. Railroads, equipped with trackage, switches, block systems, myriads of electric signal lights and rolling

stock, operated by storage batteries, are popular, and these are so complete in every detail that they are sold at prices all the way from \$25 to \$200. Then, too, the automobile is another popular toy for the little sons of the rich, and these are being shown this year at prices ranging from \$100 to \$1,000.

Walking and talking dolls are ever popular, at prices ranging from 10 cents for those of the china and rag varieties, to hundreds of dollars, where faces are of the finest grade of French china, hand painted and supplied with wardrobes that would dazzle a child of the tenement districts. One well-known firm in New York employs 50 or 60 seamstresses all the year round, who do nothing else but make dolls' clothes. All the little frills and furbelows, exquisite lingerie and gowns that bear the marks of the latest Parisian modes are turned out from this workshop each day, and aside from this they constantly receive orders for a complete change of costumes from their little customers, who watch the change in styles and desire to have their dolls always arrayed in the very latest styles.

Santa Claus is compensated in investment billions each year now for his stock of toys, and the end is not in sight, for Young America is annually becoming more capricious and more exacting in the selection of his playthings.